

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Carson City Lands Sales

DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2011-0002-EA

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Carson City District
Sierra Front Field Office
5665 Morgan Mill Road
Carson City, NV 89701
775-885-6000

November, 2010



It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE & NEED

INTRODUCTION

Section 2601(d) of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (OPLMA), Public Law 111-11, requires the Secretary of Interior through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Carson City District, Sierra Front Field Office (SFFO) to conduct sales of certain federal land within Carson City, Nevada (Carson City) and described in the Act to qualified bidders. Sale of federal land shall be consistent with section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and unless otherwise determined by the Secretary of Interior, through a competitive bidding process and for not less than fair market value. The Act includes a provision for Carson City to request postponement or exclusion of federal land from sale and directs that 5% of the proceeds from the sale of federal land be paid directly to the State of Nevada for use in the general education program of the State and that the remainder be deposited in a special account in the Treasury of the United States to be available to: 1) reimburse costs incurred by the BLM for preparing for the sale of the federal land; 2) reimburse costs incurred by BLM and the U.S. Forest Service for transfers of certain land to be held in trust for the Washoe Tribe; and 3) to acquire environmentally sensitive land in Carson City.

By letter of December 16, 2009, Carson City advised the SFFO of recommendations from the Board of Supervisors that BLM immediately pursue sale of two small parcels of federal land and to indefinitely postpone any further sales pending future direction from the City.

PURPOSE & NEED

The purpose of the sale of two parcels of federal land is to comply with and implement certain provisions of the OPLMA.

LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE STATEMENT

Section 2601(b) of the OPLMA specifically exempts these BLM land sales from land use conformance pursuant to section 202 of FLPMA.

RELATIONSHIPS TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS, AND OTHER PLANS

In addition to the OPLMA requirements in section 2601 (d)(4) that the method of sale be consistent with subsections (d) and (f) of section 203 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the OPLMA in section 2601 (d)(3) requires compliance with local planning and zoning laws as follows: "Before a sale of federal land under paragraph (1), the City shall submit to the Secretary a certification that qualified bidders have agreed to comply with – (A) City zoning ordinance; and (B) any master plan for the area approved by the City."

2.0 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVE

PROPOSED ACTION

In accordance with the OPLMA and at the direction of Carson City, BLM would offer the following described small parcels of public land for sale using competitive sale methods:

South Edmonds Parcel (NVN 088155)

The South Edmonds parcel comprises 2.51 acres of public land which fronts on Edmonds Drive in Carson City, Nevada, and is legally described as:

Mt. Diablo Meridian
T. 15 N., R. 20 E.,
Sec. 33, Lot 20.

The land is described on Carson City records as assessor's parcel 10-192-04.

Parcel 1A (NVN 088157)

Parcel 1A comprises 7.5 acres of public land located north of Old Clear Creek Road, south of US Highway 50 West and west of US 395 in Carson City, Nevada, and is legally described as:

Mt. Diablo Meridian
T. 15 N., R 20 E.,
Sec. 31, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$.

The land is described on Carson City records as assessor's parcel 9-302-03 and portions of US HWY 50 W.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative BLM would not offer the subject lands for sale and would continue to manage these lands under applicable public land laws. This alternative would not comply with the provisions of the OPLMA, and therefore, the No Action Alternative is not carried forward in this EA for further analysis.

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This chapter identifies and describes the existing conditions and trend of elements or resources in the human environment which may be affected by the Proposed Action.

SCOPING AND ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

The City of Carson City held a number of public meetings prior to passage of OPLMA in March of 2009, to solicit public comment on various proposals associated with OPLMA, including the identification of specific public lands for sale to the private sector. Internal scoping was completed by a team of BLM resource specialists between March and November of 2010. The following Supplemental Authority and Resources and other Uses tables reflect resource specialists input.

General Setting

Both sale parcels are located within the city limits of Carson City, Nevada, a community of approximately 50,000 residents which encompasses 146 square miles of land. The South Edmonds parcel is located in a residential area on the southeastern side of the City near Prison Hill. The 2.51 acre parcel of public land fronts on Edmonds Drive and is surrounded by private land. Parcel 1A is located in the southwestern portion of the city in the vicinity of the junction of US Highway 50 West and US 395. This parcel includes portions of US Highway 50 West and is situated behind a Costco store and the Comstock RV Park in a commercial business area.

SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITIES

Appendix 1 of BLM's NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1) identifies Supplemental Authorities that are subject to requirements specified by statute or executive order and must be considered in all BLM environmental documents. The table below lists the Supplemental Authorities and their status in the project area. Supplemental Authorities that may be affected by the Proposed Action and are further described in this EA.

Table 3-1 Supplemental Authorities.

Supplemental Authority*	Not Present **	Present/Not Affected **	Present/May Be Affected***	Rationale
Air Quality		✓		BLM's action to sell these lands would not affect air quality in the area. Any air quality impacts from potential development of these lands is too speculative to analyze.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	✓			BLM has determined that there are no ACEC's present in the sale area.
Cultural Resources	✓			A BLM archaeologist performed a Class III cultural resources inventory and report (CRR3-2531, Crews 2010). No historic properties are present within the proposed land sale parcels. Further details on cultural resources in the Carson City area are available in the published Carson City District Cultural Resources overview report (Pendleton et al. 1982).
Environmental Justice	✓			Health or environmental effects would not disproportionately affect minority or low-income groups.
Farm Lands (prime or unique)	✓			Resource is not present.
Floodplains	✓			Resource is not present.
Invasive, Nonnative and Noxious Species		✓		Large portions of the sale lands have been previously disturbed and noxious plants are most likely already present. The sales would not directly affect the presence of these species. Any future development following sale is likely to result in removal of vegetative material and eradication noxious species.
Migratory Birds			✓	Carried forward in analysis.
Native American Religious Concerns	✓			No concerns have been identified but consultation is ongoing with the Washoe Tribe. If information is received prior to the Decision Record, concerns will be incorporated into decision process and maintained as confidential.
Threatened and/or Endangered Species	✓			The BLM wildlife biologist reviewed the USFWS website for Nevada's Protected Species at: (http://www.fws.gov/nevada/protected_species/species_by_county.html) and determined that there are no federally-listed species in the project area (Appendix A). BLM specialists reviewed existing information associated with threatened and/or endangered plant species and determined that there are no federally-listed species known to exist on the sale lands.
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	✓			<i>Environmental Preliminary Analysis for Proposed Real Estate Disposal</i> reports were prepared by BLM Geologist/Hazardous Materials Coordinator with no evidence to indicate any hazardous materials were stored for one year or more or disposed of or released on the properties.
Water Quality (Surface/Ground)		✓		Surface water at the South Edmonds Parcel and groundwater are not present. Surface water is present at Clear Creek 300 meters to the south of Parcel 1A, but would not be affected directly or indirectly. Drainage structures from existing roads and urban development would route runoff away from Clear Creek.
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	✓			Resource is not present.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	✓			Resource is not present.
Wilderness	✓			Resource is not present.

See H-1790-1 (January 2008) Appendix 1 Supplemental Authorities to be Considered.

***Supplemental Authorities determined to be Not Present or Present/Not Affected need not be carried forward or discussed further in the document.*

****Supplemental Authorities determined to be Present/May Be Affected must be carried forward in the document.*

RESOURCES OR USES OTHER THAN SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITIES

The following resources or uses, which are not Supplemental Authorities as defined by BLM's Handbook H-1790-1, are present in the area. BLM specialists have evaluated the potential impact of the Proposed Action on these resources and documented their findings in the table below. Resources or uses that may be affected by the Proposed Action are further described in this EA.

Table 3-2 Other Resources

Resource or Issue	Present/Not Affected#	Present/May Be Affected##	Rationale
BLM Sensitive Species		√	Carried through EA.
Vegetation, General Wildlife and Fisheries		√	Carried through EA.
Access/Land Use Authorizations		√	Carried through EA.
Minerals	√		A Mineral Potential Evaluation was prepared by a BLM Geologist. No locatable or leasable mineral resources are known to exist on the sale parcels.
Soils		√	Carried through EA.

#Resources or uses determined to be Present/Not Affected need not be carried forward or discussed further in the document.

##Resources or uses determined to be Present/May Be Affected must be carried forward in the document.

RESOURCES PRESENT AND BROUGHT FORWARD FOR ANALYSIS (All Resources)

The following resources are present in the area and may be affected by the Proposed Action.

3.1 Migratory Birds

Migratory birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 and Executive Order (EO) 13186 addresses the responsibilities of federal agencies to protect migratory birds by taking actions to implement the MBTA. BLM management for migratory bird species on BLM- administered lands is based on Instruction Memorandum No. 2008-050 (BLM 2007). Based on this IM, migratory bird species of conservation concern include 'Species of Conservation Concern' and 'Game Birds Below Desired Conditions (GBBDC)'. The migratory bird species of concern that may occur in the project area are shown in Table 3-3 (BLM 2007).

The Intermountain West is the center of distribution for many western birds (Rich et al. 2004). Over half of this biome's Species of Continental Importance have 75% or more of their population here. Many breeding species from this biome migrate to winter in central and western Mexico or in the Southwestern biome. Shrub-nesting species comprise the largest number of Species of Continental Importance in this biome. The habitat within the parcels is described in the Affected Environment, General Wildlife and Fisheries sections that follow. Overall, migratory bird species that use the project area are likely skewed toward those that do not depend heavily on grasses and forbs for nesting cover and foraging and are more tolerant of a loss of understory vegetation. Bird diversity has already been negatively affected and is relatively low due to reduced habitat quality of the shrub community because of an insufficient understory.

Table 3-3. Migratory birds species of concern (BLM 2007) and BLM sensitive animal species (BLM 2003) potentially occurring in the project area.

Species	Scientific Name	Migratory Bird Species of Conservation Concern	BLM Sensitive Species
Brazilian free-tailed bat	<i>Tadarida brasiliensis</i>	N/A	Yes
Brewer's sparrow	<i>Spizella breweri</i>	Yes	No
Burrowing owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	Yes	Yes
Ferruginous hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	Yes	Yes
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Yes	Yes
Mourning dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Yes	No
Pallid bat	<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	N/A	Yes
Prairie falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	Yes	Yes
Sage sparrow	<i>Amphispiza belli</i>	Yes	No
Vesper sparrow	<i>Pooecetes gramineus</i>	No	Yes
Western pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus hesperus</i>	N/A	Yes
Western small-footed myotis	<i>Myotis ciliolabrum</i>	N/A	Yes

3.2 BLM Sensitive Species

BLM Manual 6840 (Special Status Species Management) provides policy and guidance for the conservation of BLM special status species and the ecosystems upon which they depend on BLM-administered lands (BLM 2008). BLM special status species are: (1) species listed or proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and (2) species requiring special management considerations to promote their conservation and reduce the likelihood and need for future listing under the ESA, which are designated as Bureau sensitive by the State Director(s).

All federally designated candidate species, proposed species, and de-listed species in the 5 years following their delisting shall be conserved as Bureau sensitive species. A list of sensitive animal and plant species associated with BLM lands in Nevada was signed in 2003. The sensitive animal species that may occur in the project area are shown in Table 3-3 (BLM 2003). No sensitive plant species are known to occur in the project area.

The habitat within the parcels is described in the Affected Environment, General Wildlife and Fisheries sections that follow. This area was historically greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) habitat but sage-grouse no longer occur in the area because of encroachment and urbanization of Carson City. Overall, sensitive species that could use the project area are likely skewed toward those that do not depend heavily on a grass/forb component for cover and foraging and are more tolerant of a loss of understory vegetation.

3.3 Vegetation, General Wildlife and Fisheries

The Nevada Department of Wildlife's Wildlife Action Plan characterized Nevada's vegetative land cover into eight broad ecological system groups and linked those with key habitat types characterized by plant communities or associations that support various wildlife species (Nevada Wildlife Action Plan Team 2006). The land parcels contain vegetation typical of the sagebrush key habitat type. The South Edmonds parcel is a 2.51-acre vacant lot within a residential neighborhood and is dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*, Nutt. ssp. *Wyomingensis*). Parcel 1A is a 7.5-acre vacant lot within a commercial development and is dominated by big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* Nutt.). There are several trails running through both parcels. The sagebrush habitat type is common throughout

the Great Basin and is found in upland desert areas with limited precipitation. Other plant species typically associated with the big sagebrush plant community include antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*), desert peach (*Prunus andersonii*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), and occasional western junipers (*Juniperus occidentalis*), Utah junipers (*Juniperus osteosperma*) and singleleaf pinyon pines (*Pinus monophylla*). Sagebrush range in good condition supports a lush undergrowth of bunchgrasses and forbs. Both parcels have plant communities that are shrub-dominated with few perennial grasses and forbs in the understory. There are no wetlands, riparian areas, or riparian vegetation in the parcels. There is no surface water present in the parcels.

The big sagebrush plant community supports a variety of wildlife. Raptors, turkey vultures (*Cathartes aura*), passerines, and California quail (*Callipepla californica*), bats and other small mammals including cottontail rabbits (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) and whitetail jackrabbits (*Lepus townsendii*), Wyoming ground squirrels (*Spermophilus elegans*) and other rodents, and reptiles such as short-horned lizards (*Phrynosoma douglassi*) likely occur in the area. Because of the parcels proximity to residences and development, the area receives substantial disturbance from traffic and people using the trails. Wildlife species that use the area are likely those habituated to human disturbance. The only big game species likely to use the area would be an occasional mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) may also use the area. There are no fisheries resources within the parcels.

3.4 Access/Land Use Authorizations

Neither sale parcel provides access to other public or national forest lands.

Edmonds Drive, a city street, runs along the western boundary of the South Edmonds sale parcel and provides access to the parcel. Parcel 1A currently has no access from a public roadway. The sale parcel overlaps and adjoins US Highway 50 West, however, it is not anticipated that the Nevada Department of Transportation would allow a new ingress/egress entrance onto the highway at this location due to safety reasons.

The following land use authorizations are present on the sale lands:

South Edmonds Parcel

Rights-of-way:	NVN 0060169 – gas pipeline (Paiute Pipeline)
	NVN 035560 – road (Carson City)
	NVN 047782 – communication line (Nevada Bell)
	NVN 048336 – electric line (Sierra Pacific Power Company)
	NVN 080640 – municipal sewer line (Carson City)

In 1980, the 2.51 acre sale parcel was classified (designated as suitable) under the provisions of the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act. The land was leased for a 5-year period from 1981-1986 under the same act for church purposes but was never developed for those uses. The classification has remained in place on the public land.

In July of 1998, this land was included with approximately 18,500 acres of land withdrawn from surface entry and mining, but not exchanges, recreation and public purposes, or mineral material sales for 20 years to protect open space, visual, recreation, watershed, and wildlife values in the Carson City area (Public Land Order 7349).

Parcel 1A

Rights-of-way: NVN 0043433 - highway (Nevada Department of Transportation)
NVN 0041036 - highway (Nevada Department of Transportation)
NVN 0012729 - material site (Nevada Department of Transportation)
NVN 087757 - drainage facilities (Carson City)

Under OPLMA, jurisdiction of 50 acres of land, including this sale parcel, was transferred from the administration of the Forest Service to the BLM.

OPLMA withdrew 158 acres, including the South Edmonds parcel and Parcel 1A from all forms of entry and appropriation under the public land laws, location, entry and patent under the mining laws; and operation of the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws, with the exception of sales consistent with OPLMA.

In addition to the authorized uses, both sale parcels show signs of past pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle use. Parcel 1A also shows signs of use for equipment or vehicle parking and storage and minor landscaping activities.

3.5 Soils

The South Edmonds Parcel lies within an area of Indiano variant gravelly fine sandy loam. This moderately deep, well-drained soil consists of residuum and alluvium derived from metavolcanic rocks (USDA 1979).

Parcel 1A lies within an area of Surprise sandy loam. It is deep and well-drained, and is composed of mixed alluvium. The suitability of both soils for urban development is considered fair to poor. The soil survey recommends sewage systems if the areas experience moderate-to-high density development.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

If the competitive sale of the two parcels of public land is successful, ownership of the lands would be transferred to private parties and the lands would no longer be subject to federal laws specific to public lands and would no longer be managed for multiple public uses. This ownership change would not directly impact migratory birds, special status species, wildlife, soils or vegetation resources described previously. Neither sale parcel currently provides access to other public or national forest lands, so sale would not impact access to other federal lands. OPLMA specifies that sales be subject to valid existing rights. Although administration of existing rights-of-way would be transferred from BLM to the new landowners, the existing rights for use of the land would continue for the term of the authorization and no impacts to land use authorizations should result from sale of the public land. Pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle use, in addition to unauthorized use of the sale parcels would likely be terminated or restricted by new landowners, however, due to the small acreage of land and limited uses occurring, this impact would be insignificant.

5.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Although there are no pending development applications, it is reasonable to expect that following sale, the lands may be developed for residential (South Edmonds parcel) and commercial (Parcel 1A) uses consistent with Carson City land use designations and zoning. Indirect cumulative effects from the sale

and subsequent development of the land may cumulatively affect wildlife, soils and vegetation resources.

Land development frequently involves removal, compaction or covering of soil. Soil disturbance can result in accelerated soil erosion. Potential impacts are normally reduced following construction when exposed areas are covered with buildings, pavement or landscaping. During development there is also the potential for removal or damage to existing vegetation. If both parcels are developed, up to 10 acres of sagebrush community could be permanently affected by development. As a result of the loss of remaining native vegetation on the lands, there could be impacts to wildlife species habituated to human activity which are likely to occupy the sites, and are most likely to be a few ground dwelling animals. They would most likely be displaced to other areas during any future development. The sagebrush vegetation present is common throughout the region. Potential conversion of the land at a later date to commercial or residential development would not result in a significant contribution loss to the sagebrush community. Overall potential cumulative impacts to wildlife, soils and vegetation resources are expected to be insignificant.

6.0 PERSONS, GROUPS, AND AGENCIES CONSULTED

LIST OF PREPARERS

Bureau of Land Management

NAME	TITLE	PROJECT EXPERTISE
Jo Ann Hufnagle	Lead Realty Specialist	Project Lead – Land Use Authorizations/Access
Brian Buttazoni	Planning & Environmental Coordinator	NEPA, Air Quality, Environmental Justice, Socioeconomics
Pilar Ziegler	Wildlife Biologist	T&E and Sensitive Species (animals), Migratory Birds, General Wildlife
Rachel Crews	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns
Joel Hartmann	Geologist	Minerals
Dan Erbes	Geologist	Hazardous Materials
Jim Schroeder	Hydrologist	Water Quality, Wetlands/Riparian, Soils
Katrina Leavitt	Rangeland Management Specialist	Vegetation

PERSONS, GROUPS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED

NAME	AGENCY	PROJECT EXPERTISE
Lee Plemel	Carson City Community Development	Planning/Land Use
	Washoe Tribe of Nevada & California	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns

7.0 REFERENCES

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM). 2003. Nevada BLM Sensitive Species List. Dated July 1, 2003. Sierra Front Field Office files.
- _____. 2007. IM 2008-050. Migratory Bird Treaty Act Interim Guidance. Dated December 18, 2007. Sierra Front Field Office files.
- _____. 2008. BLM Manual 6840 – Special Status Species Management. Dated December 12, 2008 under IM 2009-039. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Washington D.C. Sierra Front Field Office files.
- Crews, Rachel. 2010. *Cultural Resource Inventory for Two Land Sale Parcels, Carson City, Nevada* (CRR 3-2531(N)). On file at BLM, Carson City District Office, Nevada.
- Nevada Wildlife Action Plan Team. 2006. Nevada Wildlife Action Plan. Nevada Department of Wildlife, Reno, Nevada.
- Pendleton, L. S. A., A. R. McLane, and D. H. Thomas. 1982. *Cultural Resources Overview, Carson City District, West Central Nevada*. Cultural Resource Series No. 5, Part 1. Nevada State Office of the Bureau of Land Management, Reno.
- Rich, T. D. et al. 2004. Partners in Flight North America Landbird Conservation Plan. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Ithaca, New York.
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service. 1979. Soil survey of Carson City area, Nevada. 169 pp.

APPENDIX A

SPECIES THAT MAY OCCUR IN CARSON CITY COUNTY

Species By County



Nevada Fish & Wildlife Office

Pacific Southwest Region

[Protected Species Home](#) | [Nevada's Species List](#) | [Species By County](#)
[Amphibians](#) | [Birds](#) | [Fish](#) | [Invertebrates](#) | [Mammals](#) | [Plants](#) | [Reptiles](#)

Nevada's Protected Species by County

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
NEVADA FISH AND WILDLIFE OFFICE

NEVADA'S ENDANGERED, THREATENED, PROPOSED AND
CANDIDATE SPECIES BY COUNTY
(Updated March 5, 2010)

CARSON CITY RURAL AREA

Amphibian

C Mountain yellow-legged frog *Rana muscosa*
(Sierra Nevada Distinct
Population Segment)

Bird

C Greater sage-grouse *Centrocercus urophasianus*

Fish

T Lahontan cutthroat trout *Oncorhynchus clarkii
henshawi*

Invertebrate

E Carson wandering skipper *Pseudocopaodes eunus
obscurus*

Plant

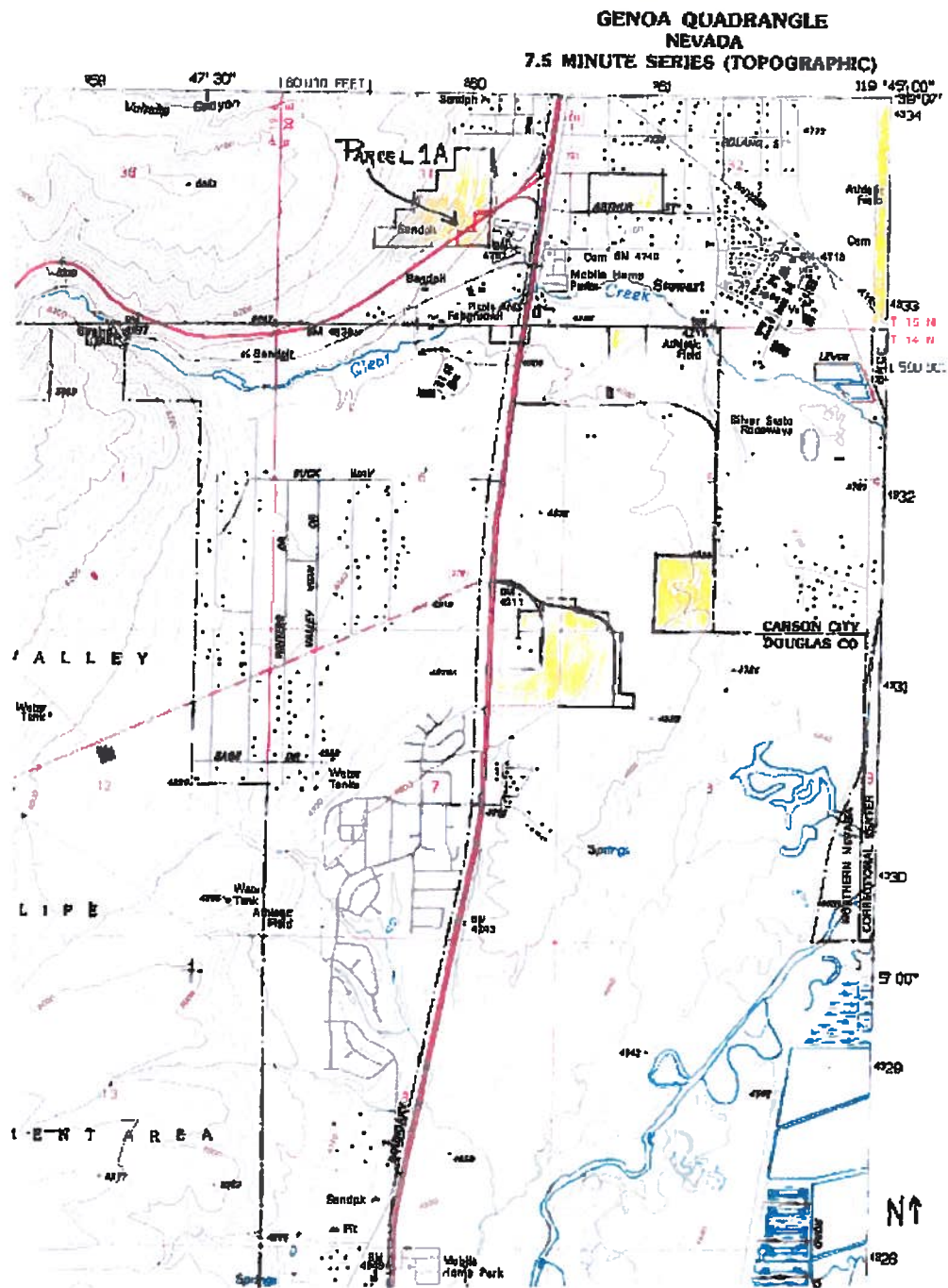
C Tahoe yellow cress *Rorippa subumbellata*

CHURCHILL COUNTY

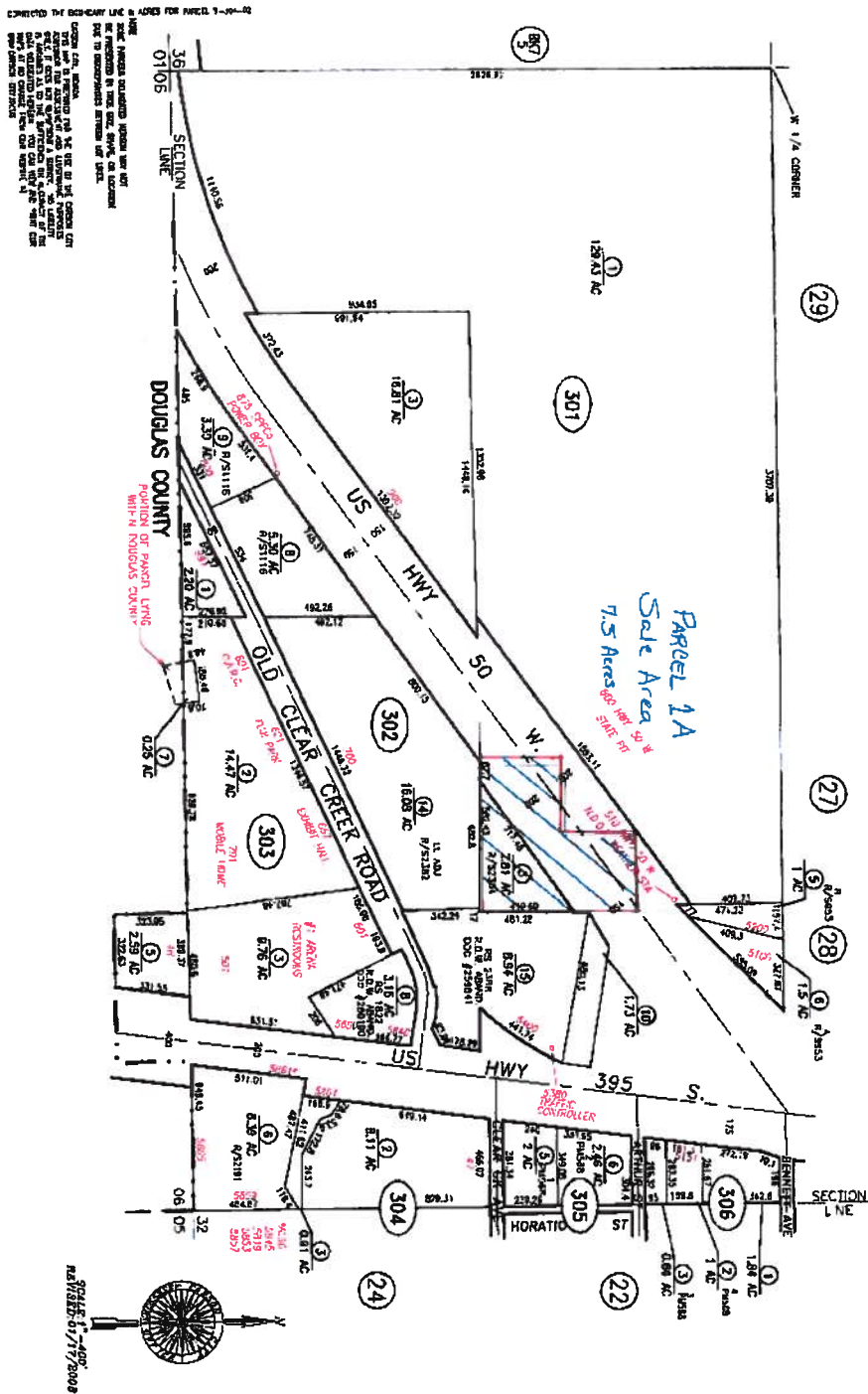
APPENDIX B

LOCATION MAPS

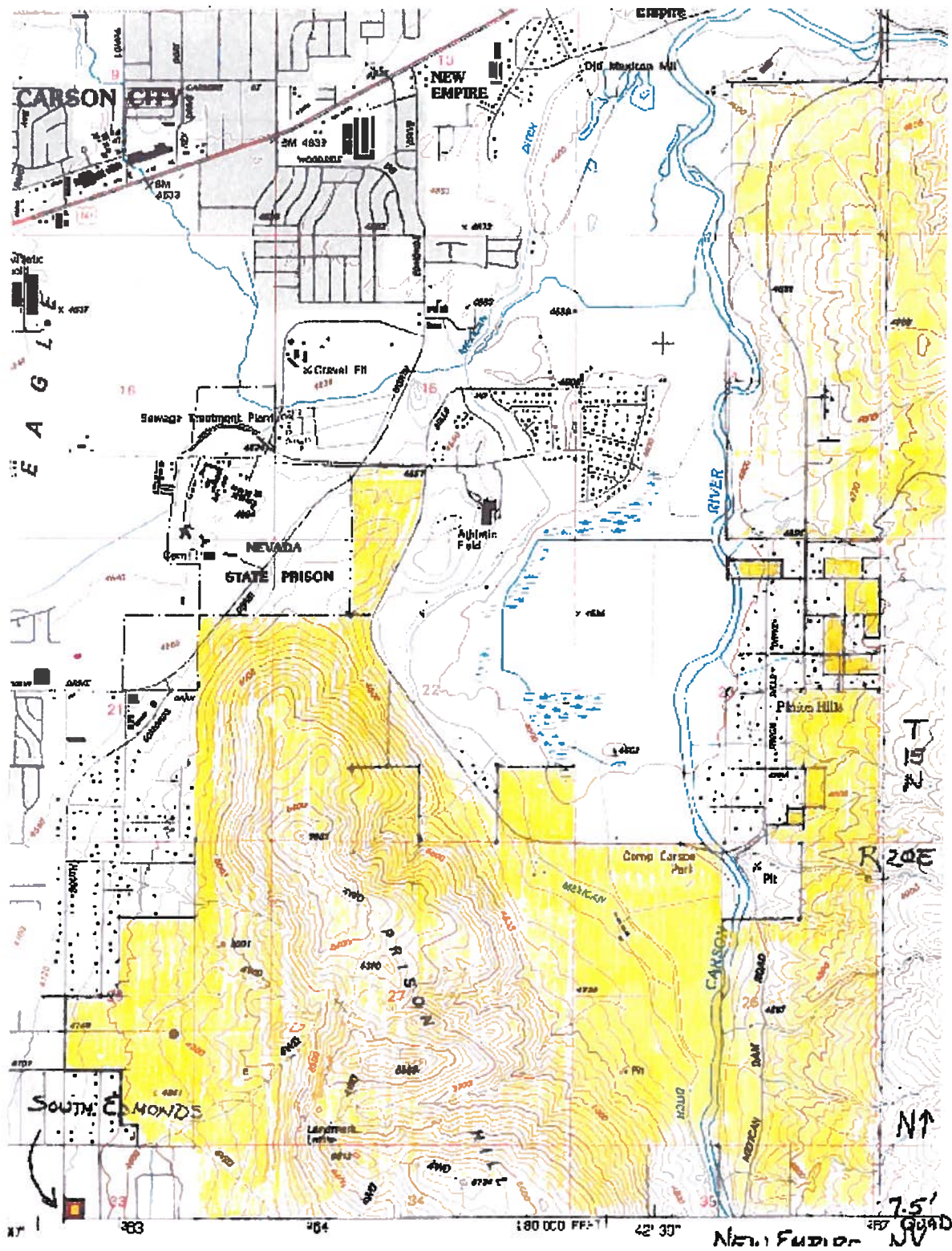
PARCEL 1A

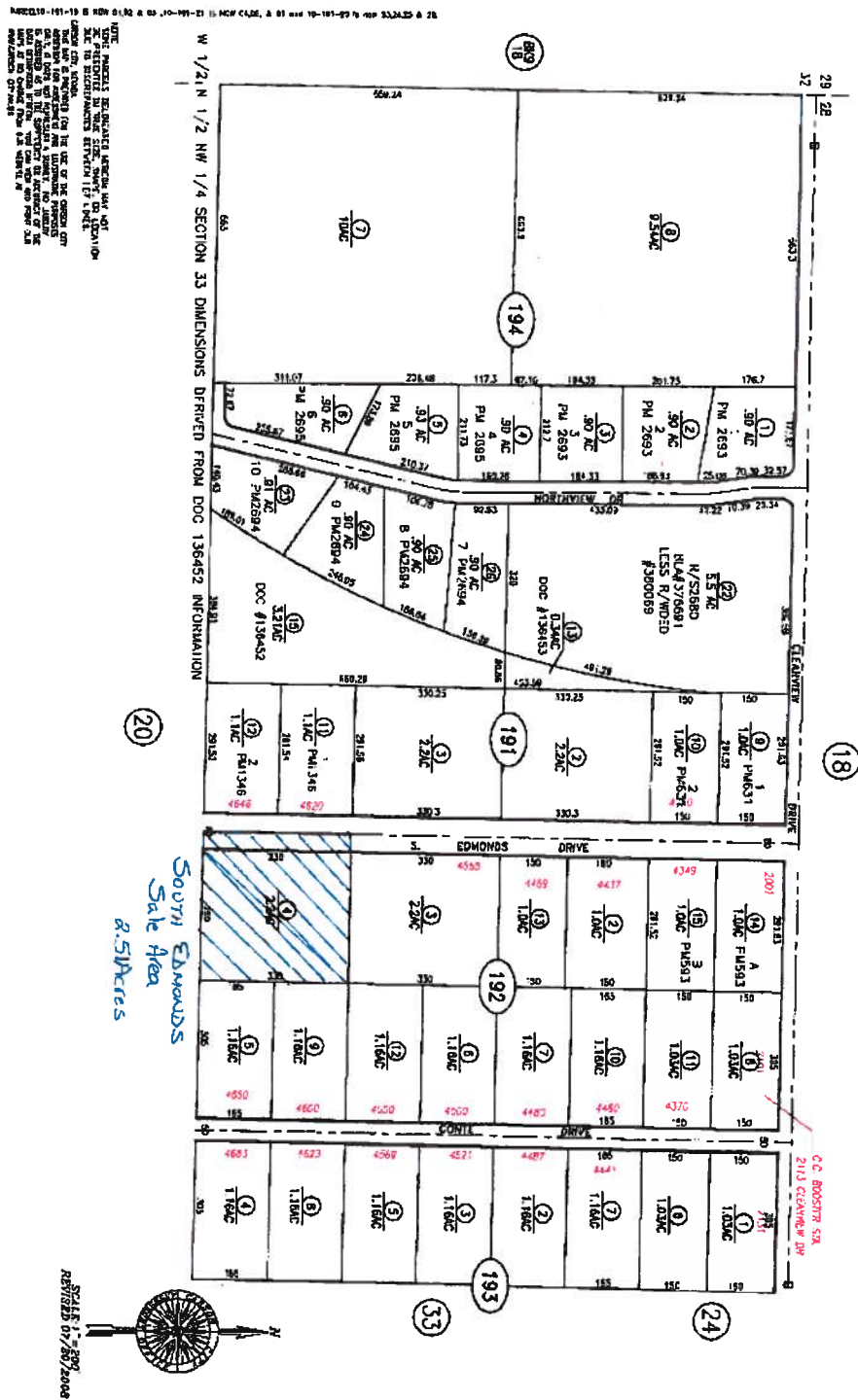


9-30



EDMUNDS PARCEL



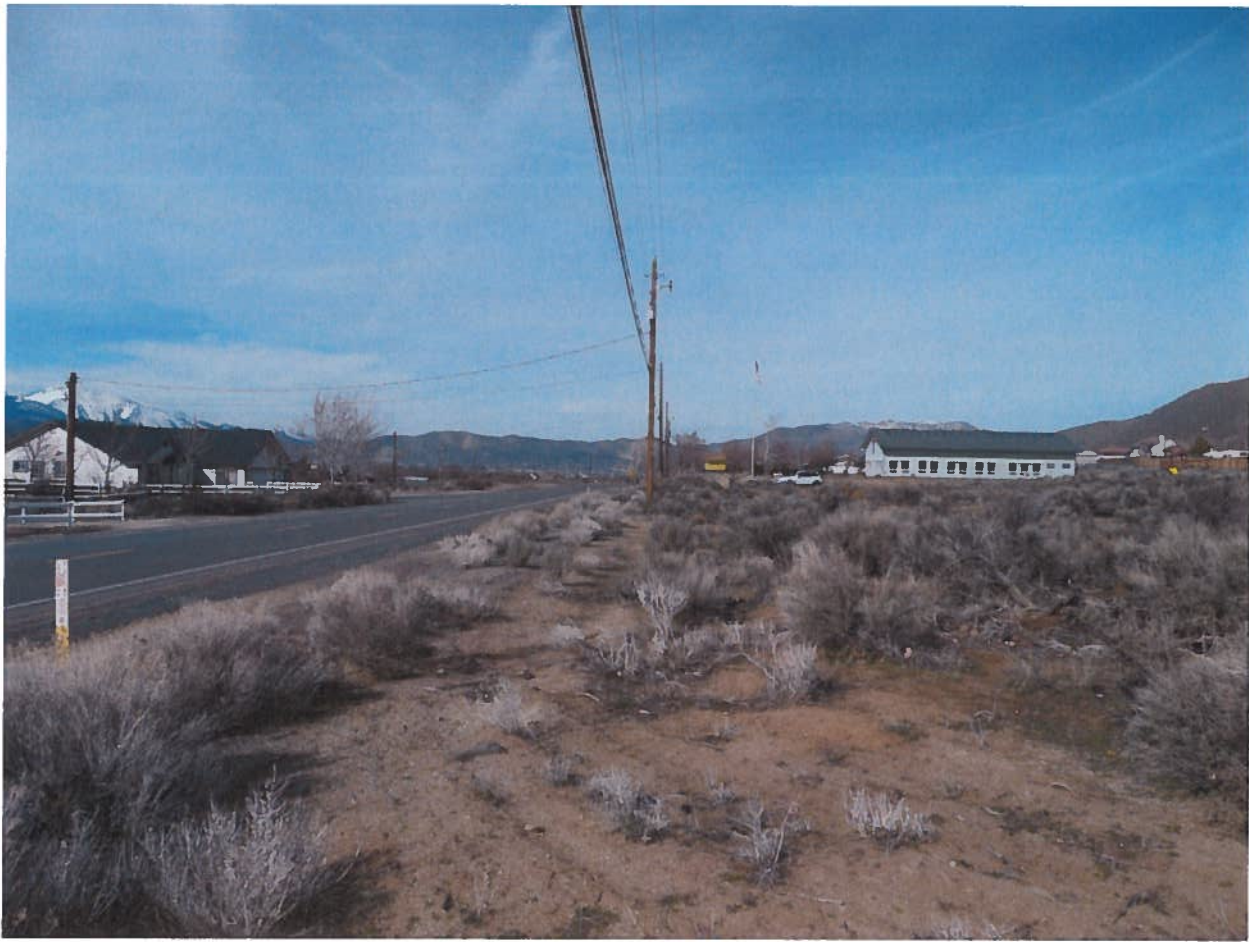


APPENDIX C

PHOTOS



View of Parcel 1A looking east along the US 50 West Highway right of way fence. RV Park is shown in background and Costco Wholesale Store is shown on right-hand side of photograph.



View of South Edmonds sale parcel taken from location near southwestern corner of parcel looking north. Edmonds Drive is shown on left-hand side of photograph.